

Hitchin Urban District



Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year
1923.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,—

The following is a Summary of the Health Conditions in your District during the year.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area: 3.675 acres.
Population (estimated): 13,470.
Number of Inhabited Houses: 3,526.
Rateable value: £10,506.
Assessable value: £51,374.
Sum produced by a penny rate: £233.

VITAL STATISTICS.

There were 213 births, and 131 deaths. There were 9 deaths of infants under one year. Taking the population at 13,470, which is the figure given by the Registrar-General, the following rates are arrived at:—

	Hitchin U.D.	England & Wales.
Birth-rate (per 1,000 living) ...	15.8	19.7
Death-rate (per 1,000 living) ...	8.4	11.6
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 living)	42.2	69.0

As compared with the general rates, the birth-rate is low, the death-rate is low, and the infant mortality rate is also low. The birth-rate has been steadily going down for years now.

There were four deaths of infants due probably to ante-natal or natal conditions.

There were no deaths from scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, or infantile diarrhoea.

There were 4 deaths from influenza, 8 deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis, 2 from other forms of tuberculosis, 14 from malignant disease, 32 from cardio-vascular disease, 21 from respiratory disease, 5 from violence, and 45 from other causes.

There were 7 illegitimate births (5 girls and 2 boys), but no deaths amongst these children.

These figures show a decline in diseases at present preventable, and are to that extent satisfactory.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following diseases were notified, with the number who were infected:—

	1923.	1922.
Scarlet fever	14	26
Diphtheria	2	5
Pneumonia	1	4
Tuberculosis—		
Pulmonary	13	17

Chicken-pox has been made notifiable this year as small-pox has appeared in this country to an appreciable extent. Small-pox, though at present only mild, is increasing, and we might at any time be faced with a serious state of affairs. Vaccination against small-pox is to-day a safe and reliable safeguard.

As will be seen, infectious diseases again showed a decline.

The attack-rates for the above diseases were as follows:—

Scarlet fever ...	1.03 per 1,000 living.
Diphtheria	.14 " "
Pneumonia	.07 " "
Pulmonary	
Tuberculosis	.96 " "

Dangerous infectious cases, or those that cannot be isolated at home, are sent to the Hitchin Rural and Letchworth Urban Joint Hospital. The Council pays for the examination of "swabs" and for diphtheria antitoxin in necessitous cases.

HOUSING.

During the year the Ministry gave permission to the Council to deal with the St. Andrew's-street area as an insanitary area. The Council has acquired 8½ acres of land on the south side of the existing housing estate (where there are 78 houses). On this a new road properly sewered is being constructed, and 80 cottages will be built upon it. Some of these will be maisonettes, or flats, and the housing accommodation will be equal to about 100

tenements. About 50 of these will be required for the re-housing of persons from the demolition of St. Andrew's-street. Houses in this latter area have already been pulled down.

CHARLTON VILLAGE.

An inquiry by the Ministry of Health was held on November 8 into the sanitary condition of the village and of the river into which many houses drain waste water. The Inspector (Dr. James Pearse) thoroughly examined the houses and followed the river Hiz all the way down to Hitchin.

As a result of this the Council has adopted the policy of abolishing all privies and converting the closets into e.c.'s. The Council will undertake the emptying and cleansing of these, as well as the removal of house refuse. The owners are to provide a greater number of e.c.'s and to improve the outlets of drains into the river. The Council is also cleaning out the river. In this way the sanitation of Charlton should be improved without incurring the great cost of connecting with the main sewerage of Hitchin.

SCHOOL INSPECTION.

During the year 421 children were examined and the following defects were found:—

Unclean	36
Malnutrition	12
Bad Teeth	115
Enlarged Tonsils and Adenoids	150
Anæmic and Heart	19
Eye Defect	61
Skin Disease	16

Besides other isolated defects.

241 children were unvaccinated.

In nearly every instance there is an improvement on last year, and the work of getting the defects remedied has gone on fairly well, with the help of the Health Visitor and Clinics provided by the County Council, and of the Massage Clinic provided by the Red Cross Society.

The Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Blood, has been very busy during the year, but has carried out all the routine inspections, and I append the details which he has kindly provided me with.

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

NORMAN MACFADYEN,
M.B., D.P.H., M.O.H.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS.

Houses inspected	150
Houses Re-inspected	60
Other Premises inspected	7
School Premises inspected	8
Trade Premises visits	415
Markets	2
Houses cleansed	8
Drainage repairs	18
Water house inspections	6
Yards repaired	10
Nuisances abated	15
Trade Premises cleansed	8
Houses disinfected	39
Cow-keepers and Dairies regularly inspected	12
Bakehouses regularly inspected ...	17
Slaughterhouses regularly inspected	16

FOOD INSPECTION.

Carcases inspected	216
Animals improperly kept	4

FOOD CONDEMNED.

Bacon	10 lbs.
Pork	15 "
Beef	24 "
Mutton	10 "
Fish	20 "
Fruit	10 "
Milk (1lb. tins)	15 "
Rabbits (cases of foreign)	2

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

A. T. BLOOD,
Sanitary Inspector.

